Environmental Laboratory Advisory Committee (ELAC)
Final Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2015

Note: Information communicated in these minutes is not to be used as official New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection policy or as an official Department notification. Contact NJDEP officials directly for official information regarding matters communicated in these minutes.

Administrative Business:
The meeting was called to order at 9:30am by the ELAC Chair, Eileen Snyder (Alpha Analytical). Meeting minutes were taken by Kathryn Brungard (Eurofins Lancaster Labs Env). The January 2015 ELAC Meeting Minutes were approved, with a motion by Rose Koplin (Accredited Analytical Resources) and seconded by Harvey Klein (Garden State Labs).

Environmental Laboratory Certification Program (ECLP): An update was provided by Rachel Ellis (NJDEP-OQA).

The new fees will be included in either the April 6th or 20th edition of the Register.
Certification renewals are due 30 days from the receipt of the letter. However, due to some programming issues with a new database slowing things down, the department will be sending out renewals in late April. Letters may be sent to labs to extend certification, if necessary.

Eileen Snyder asked if the laboratories could receive an excel file of the scope. Rachel knows a pdf is possible but unsure of excel due to security. Once every lab receives their renewal hard copy the OQA will be able to supply a pdf to any laboratory upon request. Due to security concerns the ACPLs will not be made available in excel formats.
Lots of backing from others at the meeting that this would be a helpful tool for the laboratories.
Rachel will find out from Mike if this is possible and would propose that it happens in the fall after they catch up on sending out all the scopes, etc.

The department has 2 openings – interviews are in process and once the positions are filled, it will be quite a while until the personnel are properly trained to do auditing. EPA training for auditors is 1 full week for each discipline in Cincinnati and the class is limited to 20 people.

Questions on the Certification Program may be emailed to Rachel Ellis (NJDEP-OQA) at: rachel.ellis@dep.nj.gov

Proficiency Test (PT) Program: An update was provided by Rachel Ellis (NJDEP-OQA).

Wastewater, Drinking Water, Air, and Solid Waste letters were sent out to the laboratories. TNI labs – keep on the 5 to 7 month schedule.

There are new wastewater fields of proficiency testing that are listed in the TNI LAMS interface. They will be new March 16th and there is a 6 month implementation period.

Questions on the PT Program may be emailed to Rachel Ellis (NJDEP-OQA) at: rachel.ellis@dep.nj.gov

The NELAC Institute (TNI): An update was provided by Rachel Ellis (NJDEP-OQA).

Biannual meeting was held the week of February 2nd in Crystal city VA.

Additional PT tables will probably be out within the next six months
DW FoPT – need to analyze for each method. Tables will include technology and methods.
WW FoPT and SOIL FoPT – adding technology
The PT standards are still in a working Draft.
- Volume 1 & 2 will go out as Interim in the summer meeting (theoretically)
- Volume 3 & 4 is going out to vote in the summer
  - Volume 3 = Accreditation for PT Providers
  - Volume 4 = Approval for PT Provider Accreditors

The next TNI meeting is the week of July 13th in Chicago

Sludge / Biosolids: No program updates were reported. For questions regarding this program contact Anthony Pilawski at Anthony.Pilawski@dep.nj.gov, 609-633-3823.

Division of Water Supply/Safe Drinking Water: An update was provided by Linda Bonnette (NJ BSDW).

Submission forms are available for LT2 Source Water Sampling Cryptosporidium and E. Coli Data on the Drinking Water Supply Website, nj.gov/dep/watersupply.

Schedule 1 systems begin sampling in April.

Gross Alpha
An email will be sent to the laboratories certified by New Jersey to analyze gross alpha in drinking water that Revision 8 is the only acceptable revision for the 48 hour gross alpha method.
There is a E2 method code limitation of 12 characters. Therefore, the code to be used is "ECLS-R-GA R8" (note, there is a space between the A and the R).
A question was asked if the PWTA forms have been updated for this - Linda will check.

There has been a notice from Hach concerning a problem with some colorimeter instrumentation.
Colorimeters (DR850, 890, and 900) require a software update in order to properly calculate ammonia and monochlorine values.
As you order new reagents, the update will be sent to you
During the meeting Linda called Hach…. Pocket II instrument colorimeter is also affected
The notice can be found at www.hach.com. In the search box at the upper right corner of the webpage enter 2993401 to obtain the update information.

Questions on the Drinking Water Program may be emailed to Linda Bonnette (NJDEP-BSDW) at:
linda.bonnette@dep.nj.gov

Site Remediation Program: No update was provided from the DEP.

There are lots of questions coming up regarding the NJDKQPs on data usability. For example, the acceptance form has the acceptance temperature as 2-4°C with a check box. Does a temperatures <2 make the data unusable?

NJDEP is progressing with readoption of the Remediation Standards Rule (N.J.A.C. 7:26D) with no changes before the rule sunsets in June 2015. On a separate track, the NJDEP Stakeholders Committee initiated in 2014 is drafting amendments to the Remediation Standards Rule; the review draft due out in late-2015 is expected to include soil-impact-to-groundwater screening levels converted to remediation standards. NJDEP recently revised the Ecological Evaluation Technical Guidance (February 2015).

Stake holder process – draft is due mid year
Adopt "as is" (soil remediation sunsets)
DEP will adopt rule with no changes
Post work group on line
Impact to groundwater / soil screening level to become rule
There may be the addition and subtraction of parameter so stay tuned
NJ Ecological Assessment Guidance, has been updated. See the list serve on the site remediation website.
Site remediation update to tech rules etc….. started in 2014, moving through the system and may be codified in the rules in 2015.

Old Business:

BOD – Les Glessner (Landis Sewerage Authority)
Lab qualifies results if 0.2 result for the blank (dissolved oxygen exceedance) – is this acceptable?
The State says (Deb Waller) that a blank with a result greater than 0.2 is not acceptable to be reported for DMR nor PTs.

PA DEP also says this is not acceptable.
Standard Methods states to qualify and report.
Oommen Kappil agreed that this has happened to them and PA and NJ wastewater programs say it is unacceptable.
Rachel Ellis confirmed that NJ will not accept the lab to qualifying the data and issuing the report.
The DO exceedance invalidates results.

Rachel Ellis informed the group that Joe Aiello is on extended leave for 6-8 weeks.

Subcommittees:
MUR Subcommittee: No update was provided by NJ DEP

Electronic Data Deliverables Subcommittee: An update for the SRP-EDD Subcommittee was provided by Roger Page (NJDEP-SRP-BIS).

Roger Page (SRP EDD team) provided two-sheet handout for discussion. Each sheet is double sided.

One sheet was the summary table of 14 common lab qualifiers (11 distinct qualifier flags) to be standardized by SRP in the next SRP EDD format, the same table that was appended to the January 2015 ELAC minutes (draft emailed 01/23/2015 10:44). That table is also appended to these minutes in EDD ATTACHMENT 1, which contains the text of an explanatory SRP email. That email summarizes the **lab qualifier** discussion that has been in progress during the last several meetings. SRP considers the **lab qualifier** process and **lab qualifier** flags final.

The other handout sheet was an SRP in-house email proposing **validator qualifier flags** that the next SRP EDD format could support and standardize (that is, define in SRP guidance so that those flags need not appear in a glossary). EDD ATTACHMENT 2 has an updated version of that message with some simplification and more explanation.

Regarding **lab qualifier flags**, Roger discussed questions raised by at least one Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) about non-uniformity of flags across the programs of the NJDEP. Discussion earlier in the meeting provided an example of inherent non-uniformity within NJDEP; in BOD reporting for DMR and PTs, Code E is required in place of a numerical result when the result for a sample's associated blank is not sufficiently low. Harvey Klein (Garden State Labs) provided another example of non-uniformity that would be difficult to change; analytical methods for drinking water do not call for any qualifiers.

Vinicius Bandeira (Precision Testing Labs) noted that the "Fuller Text of Qualifier from CLP" is not complete. Reviewers of the "Standardized Laboratory Table" should note the elipsis (...) that marks each place where text is omitted to state the CLP instructions more concisely.

Validator qualifier flags were also discussed. Eileen noted that end users want the EDD to match the analytical report and any qualifiers added in validation cannot override what is generated by the laboratory. The result table's LabQAqual field is for use by the laboratory and no one else should be able to change this field or in fact any other result table field populated by the lab. If an outside consultant wants to add something, he or she should add it elsewhere in the EDD. Roger asked if there should be a separate table for the validator instead of the planned field in the result table. Consultants whose reports rely on validated analytical results sometimes ask SRP for a way to add **validator flags** to an EDD so it can match the consulting report. Eileen suggested that validators should be surveyed to ask where they are entering items. Best practices need to be determined.

Validator qualifiers need further discussion. If ELAC members have any additional feedback on this issue please submit comments to Roger Page roger.page@dep.nj.gov .

Questions and comments may be directed to Andy Geary (NJDEP-SRP-BIS) at: andy.geary@dep.nj.gov

Communications / OQA Website:
ELAC Chair, Eileen Snyder (Alpha Analytical) reported that the NJDEP-OQA **website** is up to date with the minutes and the 2015 meeting calendar. ELAC members and stakeholders are encouraged to sign up for both the NJDEP-OQA and NJDEP-SRP listserv options to receive email notifications from NJDEP.

Meeting Schedule: The Meeting was adjourned with a motion by Charles Anzolut (Agra Environmental) and seconded by Steve Reduker (IAL Labs). The next scheduled ELAC Meeting will be held on **Thursday March 12, 2015 at 9:30AM**, at NJDEP, 401 East State Street, **5th Floor Conference Room** in Trenton, New Jersey. Those planning to attend must email the ELAC Secretary, Dorothy Love at: dorothylove@eurofinsUS.com by Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

Note: *All visitors must show one form of photo identification, or two non-photo IDs, when signing in at the NJDEP main lobby in the Trenton, New Jersey complex (401, 501, 440 and 428 E. State Street buildings). All visitors should be prepared to verify their identification.* ***Visitors must be escorted at all times by a NJDEP representative when in the building.***

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EDD ATTACHMENT 1

Subject: Lab Qualifier flags for the LabQAqual field of next SRP EDD format and its checker

This document summarizes a flexible system of qualifiers and qualifier flags for laboratories to use in the new SRP electronic data deliverable (EDD) format. The table below shows a subset of CLP laboratory qualifiers that will have flags standardized by SRP for the LabQAqual field. SRP reserves each flag in the table below for uses consistent with the qualifier (that is, definition) below. A laboratory will not be able to use a standardized SRP flag for any other purpose in LabQAqual. A new glossary table, which will also be part of the new EDD format, will be used by the labs to define each additional qualifier and flag the laboratory uses. The table below does not include some CLP qualifier flags (C, W, S, +) so that a lab may use these in other ways.

The new LabQAqual field will allow flags with more than one character, so a list of flags must include a separator between adjacent flags. A semicolon is the separator SRP and ELAC previously discussed and agreed to. Semicolons are only needed between flags; however, additional semicolons can be added to the beginning or end of a list of flags if it makes coding easier for the labs. See examples in the "Alternate form" column shown below.

Examples

LabQAqual	Alternate form	Meaning
	;	No lab qualifier
U	U;	Not detected
D;J	D;J; or J;D or J;D;	Sample diluted, value estimated
N;J	N;J; or J;N or J:N;	Presumptive evidence of the TIC, value estimated
LabCode	LabCode;	Defined in glossary of dataset
EI;NS	EI;NS; or NS;EI or NS;EI;	Estimated value due to interference, spiked sample recovery outside control limits

Standardized Laboratory Qualifiers and SRP Flags for LabQAqual in next EDD Format

Flag	Organic	Inorganic	Short Definition	Fuller Text of Qualifier from CLP
*		✓	Duplicate analysis is outside control limits	Duplicate analysis not within control limits. [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]
A	✓		TIC from a possible aldol condensation product	This flag indicates that a TIC is a suspected Aldol-condensation product. [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
B	✓		Chemical found in associated method blank as well as sample	This flag is used when the analyte is found in the associated method blank as well as in the sample. It indicates probable blank contamination and warns the data user to take appropriate action. This flag shall be used for a TIC as well as for a positively identified target compound. ... Blank contaminants are flagged "B" only when they are detected in the sample. [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
D	✓		Reported value is from a diluted sample	If a sample or extract is reanalyzed at a DF greater than 1 ... all reported concentrations ... are flagged with the "D" flag. This flag alerts data users that any discrepancies between the reported concentrations may be due to dilution of the sample or extract. ... [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]

D		✓	Reported value is from a diluted sample	The reported value is from a dilution. [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]
E	✓		Response exceeds response of highest standard of initial calibration range	This flag identifies compounds whose responses exceed the response of the highest standard in the initial calibration range of the instrument for that specific analysis. If one or more compounds have a response greater than the response of the highest standard in the initial calibration, the sample or extract shall be diluted and reanalyzed ... All such compounds with responses greater than the response of the highest standard in the initial calibration shall have the result flagged with an "E" ... [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
EI		✓	Estimated value due to interference	The reported value is estimated due to the presence of interference. An explanatory note shall be included ... [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]
J	✓		Estimated value	This flag indicates an estimated value. This flag is used when: (1) estimating a concentration for Tentatively Identified Compounds (TICs) where a 1:1 response is assumed; (2) the mass spectral and Retention Time (RT) data indicate the presence of a compound that meets the volatile and semivolatile GC/MS identification criteria, and the result is less than the adjusted CRQL but greater than zero; and (3) the RT data indicate the presence of a compound that meets the pesticide and/or Aroclor identification criteria, and the result is less than the adjusted CRQL but greater than zero. ... NOTE: The "J" flag is not used, and the compound is not reported as being identified for pesticide or Aroclor results less than the adjusted CRQL, if the pesticide residue analysis expert determines that the peaks used for compound identification resulted from instrument noise or other interferences (e.g., column bleed, solvent contamination). [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
J		✓	Estimated value	Enter "J" if the reported value was obtained from a reading that was less than the CRQL but greater than or equal to the MDL. [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]
N	✓		Presumptive evidence of a tentatively identified compound.	This flag indicates presumptive evidence of a compound. This flag is only used for TICs, where the identification is based on a mass spectral library search and must be used in combination with the J flag. It is applied to all TIC results. For generic characterization of a TIC, such as chlorinated hydrocarbon, or for an unknown" (no matches >= 85%), the "N" flag is not used. [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
NS		✓	Spiked sample recovery outside control limits	Spiked sample recovery not within control limits. [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]
P	✓		For pesticide or Aroclor, lower of 2 detected concentrations where RPD exceeds specified limit	This flag is used for pesticide and Aroclor target compounds when there is greater than 25% difference for detected concentrations between the two GC columns.... The lower of the two values is reported ...and flagged with a "P". The "P" flag is not used unless a compound is identified on both columns. [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
U	✓		Compound analyzed for but not detected	This flag indicates the compound was analyzed for but not detected. … [SOM01.1 & SOM01.2]
U		✓	Analyte analyzed for but not detected	If the reading was less than the MDL, a "U" shall be entered. [ISM01.2 & ISM01.3]

EDD ATTACHMENT 2

Subject: DRAFT 03/09/2015 Proposal for Validator Flags in EDDI

This is a DRAFT proposal for a flexible system of qualifiers for validators. The system would include standardized qualifiers such as the ones shown below and nonstandard qualifiers that an LSRP can append to the new glossary table for qualifiers from a laboratory. The most important validator qualifier to standardize is the one for rejection. SRP needs uniformity in the flagging of a rejected result; otherwise rejected results may be automatically included in query results from the HazSite Database, whether needed on not. In a similar way, a query needs a reliable way to distinguish "U" and "UJ" results from detections.

SRP needs a delimiter or separator to keep validator flags distinct from one another. This is especially important when a flag can have more than one character. Even with single-character flags, a words or abbreviation in a qualifier field is difficult to distinguish from a string of qualifiers. Like the lab qualifiers, examples of validation flags below use a semicolon as a separator.

Examples

ValidationQual	Meaning
Null	Not validated
;	Validated and not qualified
;J+;	Validated, biased high
;NonStd1;NonStd2;	Validated, code defined in glossary of dataset

These examples assume the validator flags will go in a new field ValidationQual (or possibly ValidatorQual) field where a separator would indicate that a result was validated but not qualified. If instead SRP defines a separate table to record validator codes, no record would be needed in that table for any unvalidated result.

SRP would reserve each flag in the table below for uses consistent with the qualifier (that is, definition) below. A EDD will not be able to use a standardized SRP flag for any other purpose in ValidationQual.

Source: http://www.epa.gov/region2/qa/qa_documents/SOP%20HW-35%20revision%202.pdf
The following definitions provide brief explanations of the national qualifiers assigned to results in the data review process.

Standardized Qualifier Definitions for Validators

Flag	Validator Qualifier Definition
U	The analyte was analyzed for, but was not detected above the level of the reported sample quantitation limit.
J	The result is an estimated quantity. The associated numerical value is the approximate concentration of the analyte in the sample.
J+	The result is an estimated quantity, but the result may be biased high.
J-	The result is an estimated quantity, but the result may be biased low.
NJ	The analysis indicates the presence of an analyte that has been “tentatively identified” and the associated numerical value represents its approximate concentration.
UJ	The analyte was analyzed for, but was not detected. The reported quantitation limit is approximate and may be inaccurate or imprecise.
R	The data are unusable. The sample results are rejected due to serious deficiencies in meeting Quality Control (QC) criteria. The analyte may or may not be present in the sample.

An alternate set of qualifiers considered for standardizing and shown at the 2/12/2015 ELAC meeting appeared at http://www.epa.gov;region10/pdf;qa/final_PCDD_PCDF_validation_guidelines_EPA_910_R_14_003.pdf. Those validator qualifiers included R, U, UJ, J, JH, JL, JK, and JN. An EDD could still use the ones that appear in the set above if they are defined in the new glossary table.